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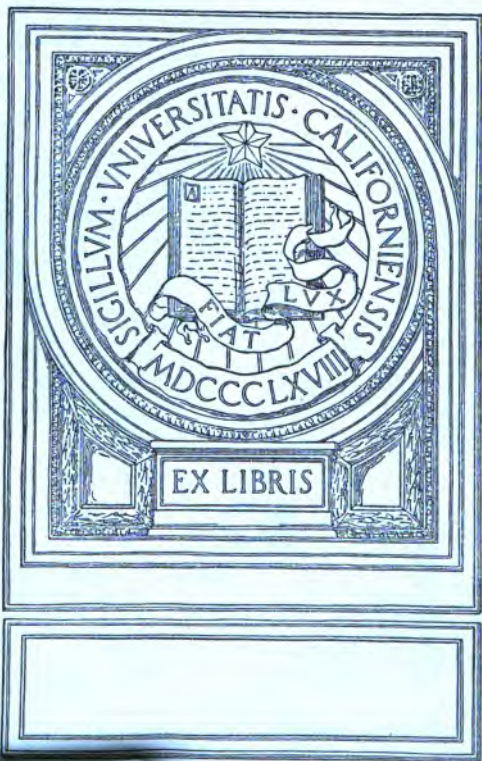
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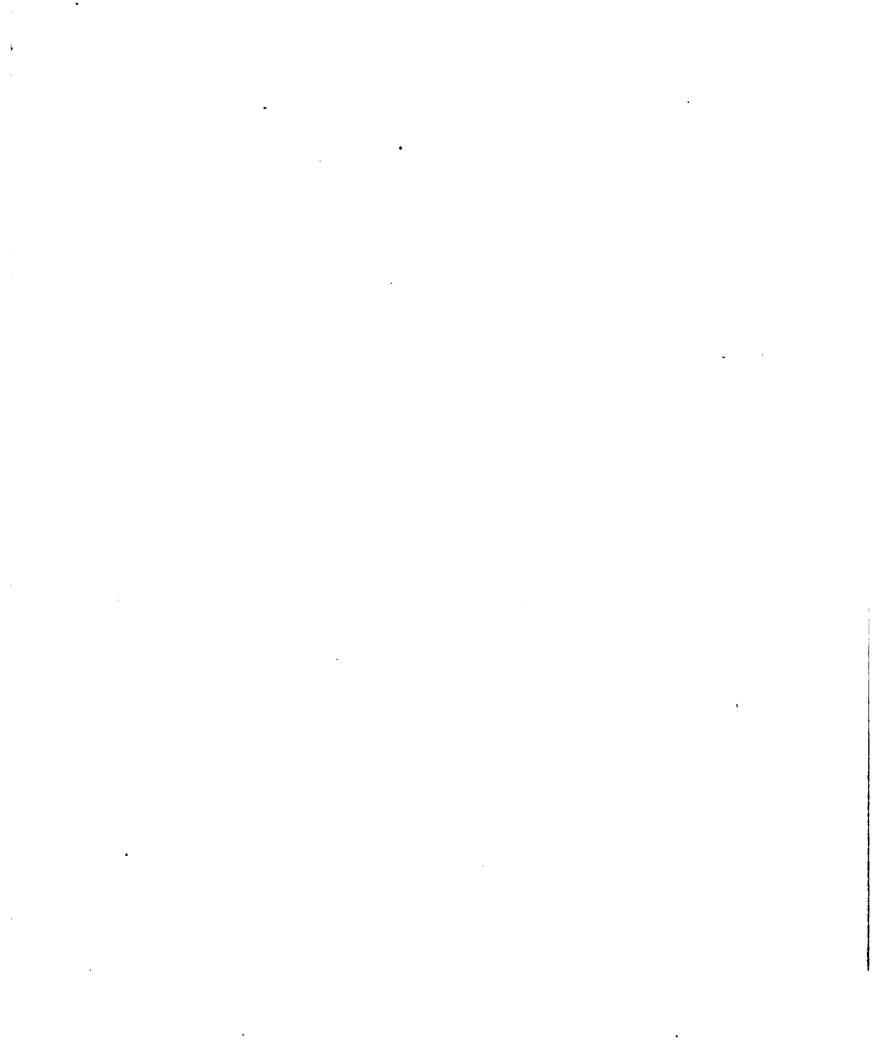
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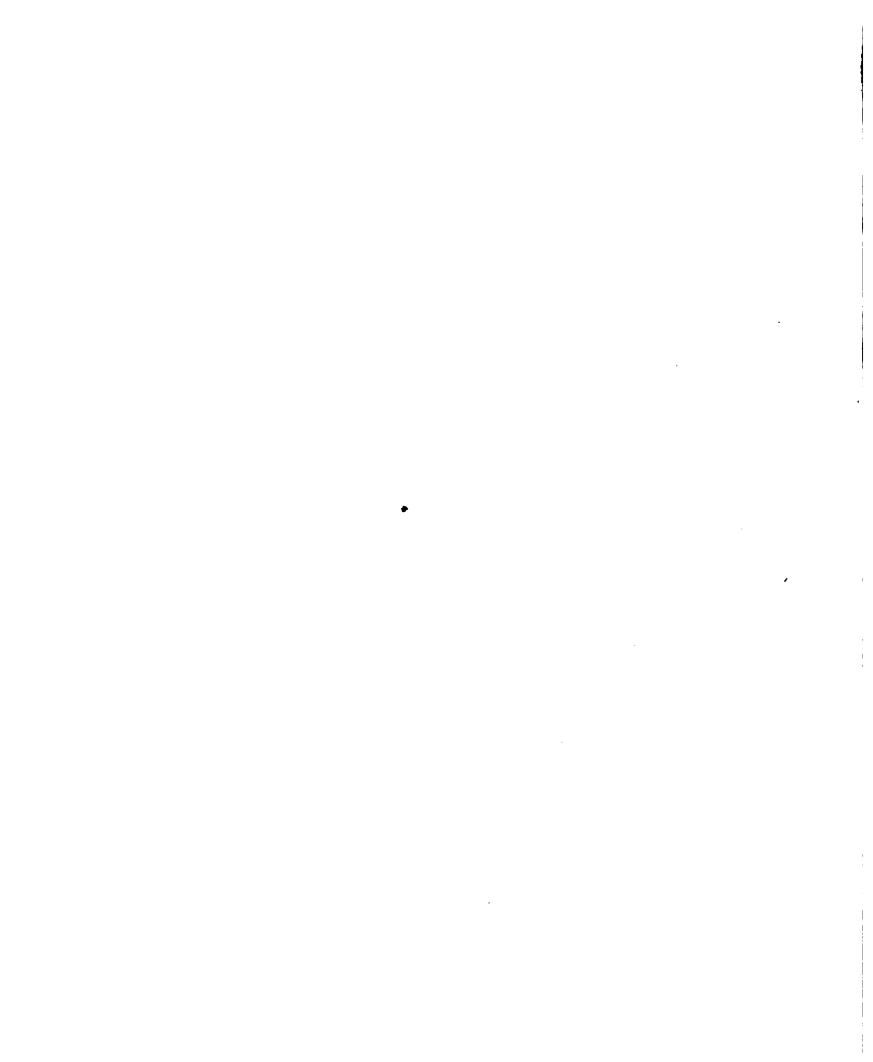
St. Paul.

YB 13767



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ST. PAUL.

(1)

ST. PAUL.

BY

REV. S. MILLER HAGEMAN,
AUTHOR OF "VESPER VOICES," "GREENWOOD,"
"PRINCETON POETS," "SILENCE," ETC.



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TO

MY FATHER.

FOR

THE HONOR IN WHICH I HOLD HIM.

M191948

(5)

ST. PAUL.

In the gloom of the Mamertine prison,
In the cloak that from Troas was
brought,
Ere the star of his soul had arisen,
Sat the white-haired apostle of Thought.
The struggling light of the candle,
As o'er his pale forehead it fell,
Shone dimly, on toga and sandal,
Shone dimly, on chain and on cell.

To Miss
Abbott
9
ST. PAUL.

The fire of his dark eye was flash-
ing

Its gleams from an aquiline face;

And the dream of his spirit was dash-
ing

Its mould with a classical *grace*.

The form of his frame, lithe and slen-
der,

By sickness and suffering was drawn;

But the power of that soul in its splen-
dor,

Lit the dark of his face like a dawn.

Through the blood-spattered floor, cold

and solemn,

A fountain wept out of the stone ;

And a cup on the shaft of a column,

That still to the traveller is shown.

In its gloom was nor crevice nor grat-

ing,

In its wall was nor window nor

door ;

For those who within it were waiting

For Death, came not forth evermore.

The Tiber, through great carven arch-

es,

With bannerol, trumpet and throng,

Still sounding of navies and marches,

Sweeps by those grim walls, sadly

on.

Flow brightly, Romanian river,

But ne'er shall thy fast-rolling flood,

Though it wear in its channel forev-

er,

Wash out thy dark waters of blood.

The mould on that dungeon was crust-

ed,

And dashed, with the pulse of the

dead ;

The chains on its prisoners were rusted

With tears, that their captives had

shed.

In the stain of its shadow there slum-

bered,

Far back in the quiet of time,

Full many a horror unnumbered,

Full many a pageant of crime.

Oft thither in triumph, the Roman,
Had brought from the battle-field
bound,
With falchion and banner, the foeman,
To be thrust through the Tullian
round.
And thither, with rabble and jostle,
Like his Lord at the prick of the
spear,
They hurried the Hebrew apostle,
With cursing and volley and leer.

He came, with the air of a stranger,

To the death he so long must have
known ;

He blenched not at dungeon or danger
ger

Nor shrank from his pallet of stone.

Within the Imperial city,

Through which years before he had
passed

A conqueror, chill to all pity ;

A captive, it found him at last.

'Mid thousands of homes he was homeless,
less,

'Mid thousands that knew him, unknown;
known;

But there lingered one there in his loneliness
ness

With whom he was never alone.

'Twas not for his glad eye to greet him,

'Twas not to behold him from birth;

That his spirit at midnight might meet
him,

Whom mortal, he met not on earth.

What cared he for death? in deaths

often

The shadowy form he had seen ;

Till in fate there was something to

soften

E'en itself, by what it had been.

For as an island lonely,

That lifts its palm at sea,

Seems fit for an exile only,

So seemeth that lone soul to me.

He felt not the fetters that bound
him,

He heard not the sentinelled pace,
He saw not the walls that around
him

Frowned down on his wonderful
face.

He feared not, for God was his keeper,
He felt but His Spirit within ;
And his soul like the dream of a sleep-
er,

Was free from the bondage of sin.

What though the Imperial eagle

Might brighten its crest in the
sky?

Caught up to the realm of the regal,

His wing-footed soul was on high.

What though in his fancy escaping,

He roamed the blue hills of his
birth?

Wert thou free thou wouldst still but

be shaping

Thy wings in the prison of earth.

Though aged, they could not appall him,

A prisoner, they could not pursue ;

They might chain, but they could not
enthrall him,

They might crush, but they could not
subdue.

And though in their triumph they bind
him

Hand and foot to the blood-breathing
ground,

'Twas enough that his bonds might
remind him,

That the Word of his God was not
bound.

I wot not in days of his childhood

By mountain and river and glen,

When he wandered unwatched thro'

the wildwood,

Was he ever so free-born as then.

I wot not when nature's sweet kind-

ness,

Grew cold in that cavernous night,

Like Milton imprisoned in blindness,

Were ever its glories so bright.

Full oft had he climbed with emotion,
The great mountains that shot up on
high
Over Tarsus, and seen on the ocean,
Their slopes, like Heaven's towers
from the sky.
And thus, on his memory reflected,
Time's shadows fell solemnly now ;
As when in their grandeur erected
They built their strong thoughts on
his brow.

Farewell for thee, father and mother,

Thy boat lightly swings by the sea;

Farewell for thee, sister and brother,

Farewell home forever for thee.

Little reck they the fate that had
sounded

Its death-knell over his soul;

Or the beckoning hand that was
rounded

For him, where the blue billows
roll.

O Genius! how hardly we cherish
Thy sumptuous gifts to the world;
Till, the rare souls that proffered them
perish,
And the colors of life have been
furled.

O shame on the ripe earth over,
For the mouths that never were fed!
Till under the snow and the clover,
er,
They were filled with the dust of
the dead.

The foliage, dreamy and tender,
 Waved fresh on the Cyprian isle;
The cities he passed in their splen-
 dor,
 Once more in the sunlight did
 smile.
He saw down the distance unbroke-
 ken
 The sail of his ship on the sea;
And he knew that the words he had
 spoken,
 With its pennon went flying and
 free.

Through the wild-roaring forests of
cedar,

Through the night-haunted jungles
of pine,

He passed, without ally or leader,

Save the stars that above him did
shine.

Was ever such traveller stranded

On the shadowy eyot of earth?

Was ever such wanderer landed

An exile on shores of his birth?

Where the sun on Eurymedon quivers
From the Seglian heights to the
sea ;

In perils of robbers and rivers,
Thrice scourged and thrice ship-
wrecked was he.

In perils of city and prison,
By hunger and sickness bested,
He was stoned by the mob in deri-
sion

And dragged through the street as
one dead.

O the visions that often and often

Thronged back on his memory there!

Of those who like him, loved to soft-

en

Their fate, with the spirit of prayer.

Of Christ, in the Forum's Commo-

tion,

Of Moses, on Nebo afar,

Of John, in the islanded ocean,

Alone, 'neath the sentinel star.

The beast in the crowded arena,

No longer fell dead at his spear ;

The sounds in the Grecian æscena

No longer provoked his dull ear ;

The hoof of the horse on the high-

way,

To distant Damascus was still ;

No more to his cursing reply they,

Nor wheel at his terrible will.

The stones that he hurled upon

Stephen,

Rose up in his dungeon around,

Till each one, chill and glossy, seem

ed even

Alive, with a face and a sound.

O God! there's no presence like ab-

sence

That comes to a human heart;

And nothing, in widest space, that can

keep

Two souls that have met—apart.

Chained prisoners came crouching be

fore him,

To mock him with manacled hands ;

Sad voices swept hauntingly o'er him,

Like night-winds o'er dim cypress-
lands.

Sure never hath rowel or rider,

Urged harder the fast-flying horse ;

Sure never hath memory grown wider

To tighten the rack of remorse.

He thought of them all as they only

Can think, who, with tremulous
breath,

Draw near once again, late and lonely,

To the dead, through the doorways
of death.

And grand must have gleamed to his
vision,

The sword, howe'er fiercely it shone;
That struck through the gloom of his
prison,

A light on his crown and his throne.

When the great Night wipes up softly

The blood-drop of the sun,
From the earth, where all too oftly,

Its deeds of strife are done :
Sleep falls on the moil and rattle,
With dew from the dreamy sky ;
Like faint music on fields of battle,

Where the dead and the dying
lie.

'Tis then that the broken features,
And wrinkles in frames grown old,
Are the chinks through which God's
dim creatures,
Catch twilight of things foretold.
And thou, spite thy dying sorrow,
Did'st thou not in thy darkened
woe,
By faith, for thy vision borrow,
The light that shines never below.

What is it that makes him to linger,
So long o'er each cycle and clime;
While the frostwork of history's finger
Melts off on the background of Time?
What is it that makes kings grow rest-
less,
That from their strong thrones they
bow down,
To mark though his bare brow be
crestless,
The gleam of the soul's muffled
crown?

He came,—but without observation,

Like the kingdom of God that he
bore ;

He came,—without herald or sta-
tion,

To those he had not seen before.

The sail of his vessel blew gently

By cities, where oft on the tide,

With music, and banner and entry,

Great navies had sailed in their
pride.

With a lone winged haste like the
raven

That never returned to its rest;
He founded the church that stands
graven,

On the globe from the East to the
West.

He pierced with one deep intuition,
The shadow of Time to the last;
He swept such a sphere with his vi-
sion,

That the Future lay trampled and
past.

He preached, but no council installed
him,

He prayed, but no hand blessed his
head;

The voice of Jehovah had called him,
To stand in his glorious stead.

What churchman had e'er such com-
mission?

What preacher such spirit and call?
Contented in every condition,
Contained in whate'er might befall.

Heresiarch! faster and faster

The world throngs that wonderful
youth.

Heresiarch! So was thy Master,

Though front the clear forthright of
Truth.

Like to Him with thy countenance shat-
tered,

Thou barefooted beggar, begone!

Like to Him with thy palium tattered,
Wan Tatterdemalion.

They told him that others were teach-
ing

Strange doctrines, he never had
taught;

Tw'as enough if but Christ they were
preaching,

Whether falsely or truly they
wrought.

His spirit like summer was mellow,
And his soul like a tree, on whose
top,

The ripe fruit that hangs red and yel-
low,

Has nothing to do but to drop.

He stood in the dazzling splendor

That on the Acropolis shone ;

Where thousands bent thirsty to render

His cörse to precipitous stone.

He stood there with spirit undaunted,

As the eagle-swan stands in the
sun :

And held the hushed thousands enchanted,

Till the day over Athens was done.

He lifted up Christ in his beauty,
Colossal o'er sect and o'er creed;
To draw all men to him in duty,
As the sun in the sky draws the
seed.

He frowned on the forms of division,
That fence men, for trifle, apart;
He broke down the walls of partition,
And the world felt the beat of his
heart.

He spake not of city or building,

He sung not of statue or art ;

For a glory, unearthly, was gilding

The kingdom of Heaven in his heart.

And though by their pageants sur-
rounded,

Like the lily that sees not its stem ;

'Mid the music with which they re-
sounded,

'Twas of Christ that he thought, not
of them.

He burned up the books, Superstition

Had heaped with a sorcerer's hand,

As she sat in the gates of tradition,

And stared like the Sphinx to the
sand.

Bought up from his boyhood a bigot,

He turned from the Jew to the
World;

And preached, where the sail of his
frigate,

On its far distant shore was un-
furled.

Brought up in the empire of battle,

Brought up in its pride and its
flower;

What wonder that force was his chat-
tle?

What wonder his passion for power?

But never a conflict so splendid,

Hath sent through the round earth
its thrill,

As that 'ere his warfare was ended,

Was waged with his conquering
will.

He stood in the furnace of passion,

And conquered its heat and its
stride;

He stood at the forum of fashion,

And vanquished its power and its
pride.

He stood in the strength that is weak-
ness

To those who have felt not its birth;
With the might of invincible meek-
ness,

He moved the whole empire of earth.

The shape of his only ideal,

Was one he could never attain ;

It rose o'er the realm of the real,

But victor, he followed in vain.

He moulded his soul on the meas-
ure

Of God, and not of his own.

He laid up his crown and his treas-
ure,

For the deed that shall never be
done.

Will no one, alas, come to open

These gates warm with freedom's
breath?

Brave heart, must thou perish unhol-
pen

Save but by the Angel, Death?

Is the world to come but a bubble,

Blown off at a child's mouth in
air?

Is this life but a cheating trouble

Lost clean out in thy cold grave
there?

Can it be that the love and the
beauty

In mother and child are in vain?

That stern Death is doing its duty

O'er that which shall live not
again?

Furl back, mists of space, from dead
faces

Furl back, if mayhap, as before,

They may come softly out in old
places,

And look on us warmly once more.

The soul, like a shell that is sound-
ing

In a strange foreign land of the sea;
Sings an echo that ever is rounding

The Kingdom of Heaven in me.

And sometimes its murmur seems
faintly,

As it folds round the spirit within,
To waft from the shores of the saint-
ly,

The sound of its vast silent din.

It sings to me in the shadow,

It sings to me in the sun,

It sings in the bird and the meadow,

And its song is never done.

I know not if Death shall sever,

My soul from the years to be ;

But I know that forever and
ever,

It sings and it sings to me.

Go, Doubt hide thy wan face for-
ever,

In the gloom of that Tullian hold ;
Come thou forth upon earth again
never

To vex men till time shall be told.
Immortality ! Christ hath arisen,
By night from the rock-riven
tomb,

And shines o'er captivity's prison,
The star of the great World to
come.

Great multitude no man can number,

Calm beautiful homes of the

Blest ;

The heart, though it throbberh in slum-

ber,

But knocks at thy closed doors for

rest.

And thought, like a night-bird, lone-

ly,

Breaks its wing on thy walls in her

flight.

Ah ! Death's rusty night-key only

Can open the Palace of Light.

Go think of him, ye, on whom light-

ly

The load of transgression hath

pressed ;

Go think of him, ye, to whom nightly,

Sleep brings but the dream of un-

rest.

Go think of him, Genius, God-gifted,

Whose wrecks, like unpiloted ships,

On the waters of doubt have been

drifted,

Sun-tipped in the gloom of Eclipse.

Shine on, thou proud figure, for-
ever,

Though the sun that first saw thee
hath set,

Shine on, all thy years cannot sever

The glory that hangs round thee
yet.

And though thou dip farther and
farther,

As a sail down the trend of the
sea ;

Great Spirit ! 'Twill serve but the
rather,

To bring us the nearer to thee.

The chieftains that ravished those re-
gions,

Lie dead in the days that are done ;

We hear not the tread of their
legions,

We heed not the conquests they
won.

But still like a shout, undiminished,

Over city and hamlet and home ;

“I have fought a good fight!” “I
have finished!”

Rings out of that dungeon at Rome.

He went as he came, like a victor,

He went as he came, by the
sword;

But not by the blow of the lictor,

But the knight-errant touch of the
Lord.

With the stars for processional splen-
did,

Through the triumphal-arch of the
sky:

He passed, like a conqueror attend-
ed,

And more than a conqueror on
high.

O Paul! though the world from thy
preaching,

Should turn with the stream to the
sea;

'Twere enough for the truth of thy
teaching,

Had it wrought in the whole world,
but thee.

Thou hast need of no sculptor or
painter

To freshen the power of thy face.

For fairer as others grow fainter,

Thou shalt leave on each spirit thy
trace.

Albeit the creeds of the Ages,

Rave fiercely with ravin and ramp;

Like lions in opposite cages,

Like cannon in opposite camp.

Albeit that men are defending

Christ's love with the sword and the

stave;

All sects o'er his body are blend-

ing,

As sons at a sweet mother's grave.

Beheaded—but Jesus hath crowned
him,

“Well done” is the wreath of his
fame ;

Forsaken—but nations are round him,
To echo the sound of his name.

Imprisoned—but space is the portal,
Flung sheer to his ministering soul ;

Immured—but forever immortal,
To the racer that presses the goal.

The Colossus has strid from its col-
umn,

The banquets are cold in their bow-
ers ;

The water sleeps mastless and solemn,
And the moon on the mouldering
towers.

The idols no longer are reaching

Their palms to the worshipper's
call ;

But Paul, on that pedestal preaching,

Stands alone there forever, o'er all.

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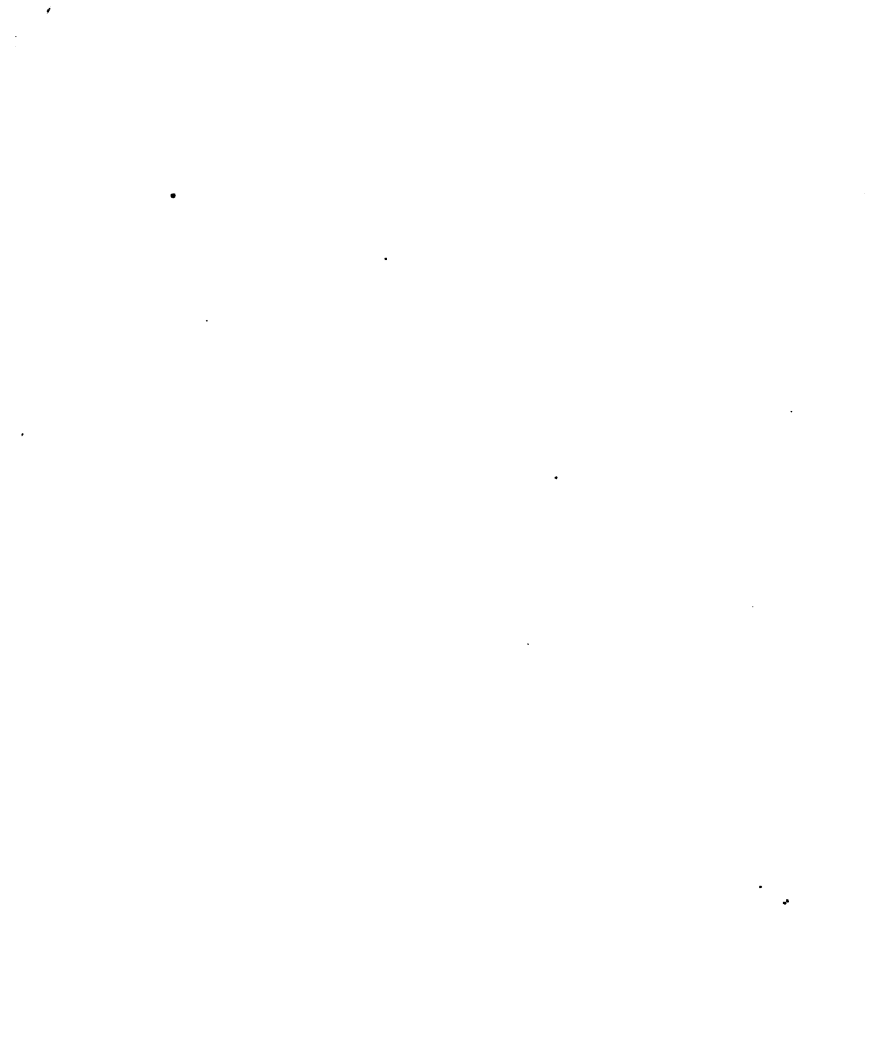
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